

DOTA 123 TEACHING 27
GOSPEL: A DISCIPLE KNOWS THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AND DEATH

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T = teacher 1 S = teacher 2

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is the third day that two teachers explain the good news from the Bible. The good news in the Bible answers 5 questions of people: One. "How do we know that God exists?" Two. "Why is there so much suffering and death in the world?" Three. "What is the solution to the problem of suffering and death?" Four. "Which response does God require of people?" Five. "What may every Christian expect from the new life in Christ?" As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: **A DISCIPLE KNOWS THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AND DEATH**. No single person can solve the problem of suffering and death! Many attempts have been made to tackle this problem, but without success.

(S) How can you get to know that God really solved the problem of sin and death? The Bible tells us that God has taken five steps through Jesus Christ as Mediator to solve the problem of suffering and death.

(T) **THE FIRST STEP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. JESUS BECAME A MAN.**

One. Why is the coming of God himself to us on earth much better than just sending a messenger to us? Let me read John 1:1,14 and Matthew 8:17. "In the beginning was the Word, ... and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases." Jesus Christ is God who took on the human nature and came to live amongst us on earth! When your friend sends you a letter or a messenger, it is never the same as when he comes himself in person. When your friend comes to you, he listens to you, empathizes with your problem, puts his arms around you, speaks comforting words to you and helps you practically. That is what the God of the Bible did to the suffering people in this world! The God of the Bible did not merely send a representative, like a prophet to the people in this world, but he came himself! Without laying down his divine nature, God took on our human nature and lived as close as possible to us. Two. Why is the reality of God becoming a man in Jesus Christ much better than a mere appearance of God to man? Let me read Philippians 2:5-7. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." Jesus Christ did not appear in the sky as a mighty god, but really lived amongst us as an ordinary man. If Jesus Christ had only appeared in the sky as a mighty god, he could not have identified himself with our problems of rejection, suffering and death in this world. Consequently, we people on earth would not have accepted him as a reality in our human history. But Jesus Christ was a real person in our world and in our history. He was not a myth or ghost or momentary appearance in the sky. He lived amongst us for over 30 years! Many thousands of people knew him personally, saw his miracles with their own eyes, heard his teachings with their own ears, touched him with their own hands and experienced his healing and renewal. And he identified with their feelings, temptations and hardships of life. God's way to solve the problem sin, suffering and death is to become a human being!
Summary. *Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and suffering by becoming a human being. He lived amongst people and identified himself with their needs and suffering.*

(S) **THE SECOND STEP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. JESUS BECAME A SERVANT.**

One. Why is the coming of God himself to us on earth as a servant much better than just coming to us as a mighty ruler? Let me read Mark 10:42-45. Jesus called his disciples together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus Christ did not come as a mighty ruler into this world, but as a humble servant! If he had come as a mighty ruler, he would have used his position, wealth and power to force people on earth to serve him. And people would have served him for their own selfish political or economic reasons. However, Jesus Christ came as a humble servant. He did not come to be served, but to serve people. He did not threaten, but taught the people. He never used force, but persuaded people. He did not associate with mighty and influential people or with rich and famous people, but he associated with needy and suffering people, and with the outcasts and sinners.

Do you still remember the cause of suffering? People suffer because they are godless: they are unwilling to serve the God of the Bible! And people suffer, because they are wicked: they are unwilling to serve other people! There is so much suffering in the world, because nobody wishes to be a servant! Everybody wishes to be served by others, but Jesus Christ came to serve us in our greatest needs and suffering. Jesus Christ came to seek people

that feel lost. He came to save people from their sin, suffering and judgement. God's way to solve the problem of sin, suffering and death is to be a servant!

Two. Which example of service did Jesus Christ give to his followers? In John 13:4-5,12-15, Jesus Christ washed the feet of his disciples. Washing the dirty feet of guests was the customary duty of the lowest slave in the household. None of the disciples wanted to be the least and serve the others. However, Jesus set them an unforgettable example. As the Lord of the universe he took upon himself the task of the lowest slave. As Teacher he served his students. Jesus Christ is the best example of a servant!

Summary. *Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and suffering by becoming a servant. He tackled the needs of broken and suffering people in this world.*

(T) THE THIRD STEP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS.

Why did someone have to die in the past? Let me give an illustration from the Old Testament during the time before Christ came to earth. In Hebrews 9:7,18-22 we read how the Old Testament covenant was effective only by the shedding of blood. The law says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." So as a preparation for the future, God required his people to bring animal sacrifices. Symbolically, the slaughtered animal *took the place of* the sinner. Every year, the high priest entered temple with blood, which he offered for the forgiveness of his own sins as well as for the sins of all the people. Nevertheless, people still felt guilty and ashamed for their sins. The blood of animal sacrifices could not take away sin, guilt and shame, because animals and humans were so very different. The animal sacrifices were only *a symbol* that reminded the people of their sins and pointed to the fact that in the future a perfect sacrifice for human sins would be absolutely necessary! In order to solve the problem of human sin and suffering, there must be a HUMAN sacrifice!

Who is this perfect human sacrifice? Jesus Christ was this perfect human sacrifice. According to Philippians 2:5-8, Jesus Christ was God, who humbled himself, took on the nature of man and became *a human being in human history*. According to Hebrews 4:15 and 7:26-27, he was *completely sinless*, holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners and perfect forever! According to John 10:11-18, he laid down his life by his own decision and *completely willingly*. And according to John 1:29 and 3:16-17, he was *God's only choice for the task* of dying and saving the world. While God commanded the prophets in the Old Testament to bring his message to people, God commanded only Jesus Christ to lay down his life so that the sins of the world may be taken away. This task was not given to any other human being! In the whole history of this world, only Jesus Christ meets all four conditions: Jesus Christ is human. Jesus Christ is sinless. Jesus Christ is willing to die and Jesus Christ received from God the task to be the sacrifice for the sins of this world!

What are three unique characteristics of the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ? According to Hebrews 9:12, Jesus Christ did *not sacrifice the blood of animals*, but his own blood, thus obtaining an eternal redemption for believers! According to Hebrews 9:24, Jesus Christ did *not serve in any earthly temple*, but in heaven where he represents us right in the presence of the Living God! According to Hebrews 9:25-26, Jesus Christ did *not sacrifice himself again and again*, but only once in history in order to permanently take away the guilt, shame, condemnation and power of sin!

Why did Jesus Christ have to die? One. According to Romans 5:6-10, Jesus Christ had to die in order to take away God's holy and righteous anger against our sins. Our sins had made us to be God's enemies, but the death of Jesus Christ became the sacrifice of atonement that satisfied God's holiness and righteousness. His death became *God's punishment* of our sins. If God had not punished our sins, he would not have been holy and righteous! The holy and righteous God of the Bible *must* punish sin! The death of Jesus Christ makes it possible for the holy and righteous God of the Bible to justify us, that is, to forgive us our sins! Two. Jesus Christ had to die in order to bring us to God and reconcile us with God. Our sins had separated us from God, but the death of Jesus Christ became *the bridge that opened the way back to God*. His death became God's reconciliation with us. If God had not reconciled us to himself, he would not have been merciful, gracious or loving! The merciful, gracious and loving God *must* reconcile sinners to himself! The death of Jesus Christ makes it possible for the merciful, gracious and loving God of the Bible to reconcile us to himself, that is, to make us a part of his people. The cross of Jesus Christ is the only place in the world and in human history where the righteousness of God and

Summary. *Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and suffering by dying on the cross. He died in order to bear the punishment for sins and to open the way to be reconciled to God.*

(S) THE FOURTH STEP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. JESUS WAS RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD.

Did the resurrection of Jesus Christ really happen? Yes. There are more eyewitnesses of his death and resurrection as well as written documents from that time than for any other historical event that was recorded in any document in the world! The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a miracle of God! Miracles cannot be proved or disproved by empirical science. Miracles belong to the science of history and the facts of history are based on the dependability of its witnesses. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has been

witnessed and attested by more people than for any other historical event in the history of the world. Moreover, these witnesses have proved to be of the highest moral quality and their testimonies are supported by archaeology and even non-Christian historical documents.

What would happen if Jesus Christ had not been raised from the dead? Let me read 1 Corinthians 15:17-20. “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has been raised from the dead.” If Jesus Christ had *not* been resurrected from the dead, then what he accomplished by his death would be completely useless. For people who live, *faith* in a dead Saviour would be futile. For people who are dying, *hope* in a dead Saviour would be utterly hopeless. There would be no hope and no life after death. Everything would end in death and death would be the real victor! However, Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead and he lives! He lives to complete his work of salvation. While all other prophets and religious leaders in the world lie dead in their graves, Jesus Christ lives and is at this very moment actively working to save people! Not eternal death, but eternal life will have the ultimate victory!

What are the benefits of Christ’s resurrection for Christians? Romans 6, Ephesians 2 and 1 Corinthians 15 clearly teach that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has many benefits. One great benefit is that Christians already in this life experience the transformed life! Another great benefit is that Christians will receive a complete immortal body at the resurrection of all the dead in the future.

Summary. *Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and suffering by being resurrected from the dead. His resurrection guarantees for Christians a transformed life now on earth and a transformed body in the future on the new earth.*

(T) THE FIFTH STEP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.

What is the authority and task of Jesus Christ in heaven? Let me read Philippians 2:9-11 “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Let me also read Ephesians 1:20-23. God seated Christ “at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body.” And let me read 1 Corinthians 15:25-26. “He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” After his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. He is given the highest position and all authority in the universe. He is the Lord and King of the universe and rules over the universe until he has put all things under his feet. One day everybody will bend before him and acknowledge that he is the Lord, whether they do this willingly or unwillingly. Jesus Christ is also the head of all believers in all the churches. He rules the universe in the interest of his Church. He rules the universe through his Word, which is recorded in the Bible, through his Holy Spirit, who works in the hearts and lives of people and through angels, who protect his people and especially execute his judgements on earth. The work of Jesus Christ culminates in the final judgement and in the renewal of the universe. Only true Christians and righteousness will dwell on the new earth.

What is the special task of Jesus Christ right now? Let me read Hebrews 7:25. “He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” The very special task of Jesus Christ right now is to save people completely! Therefore he prays for them, sympathises with their struggles and helps them in their needs. In Romans 8:28-39 he guarantees that no believer in him will ever be condemned by God, that no believer in him will lack what he really needs and that no believer in him will ever be separated from God’s love! This work of Jesus Christ is happening right now! Jesus Christ is right now praying that also you may know him, be saved and share his wonderful new life.

Summary. *Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and suffering by ascending in to heaven. He works from heaven on this earth in order to save sinners and to put all evil people under his feet.*

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. How would you answer the question, “What do you think is the right or appropriate response to God for what he has done for you?” We will discuss this question tomorrow. Listen tomorrow to Discipleship training on the air.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.